WEIRD ADVENTURES ON OTHER WORLDS—THE UNIVERSE OF THE FUTURE
PLANET
COMICS
10¢
JULY
No. 19
REEF RYAN
BLASTS THE FLESH-HUNGRY SPIDERMEN TO REACH NEPTUNE'S HIDDEN PARADISE IN
"MONSTERS OF THE INNER-WORLD"
GALE ALLEN AND HER GIRL SQUADRON
MARS—GOD OF WAR
STAR PIRATE
AND MANY OTHERS

HAVE YOU SEEN The Sensational BRAND NEW RANGERS COMICS?

WITH BOMB AND BAYONET THEY HARASSED THE JAPS, STRIKING, THEN GHOSTING INTO THE DENSE MALAYAN JUNGLE WITH INDIAN STEALTH. THESE WERE THE NEW RANGERS, MORGAN'S MEN, TERROR OF THE YELLOW HORDE, AND WITH THEM FEARLESS YANKS MARCHED TWO GIRLS, YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL AND MYSTERIOUS.

New

GLORY FORBES, VIGILANTE, WAGES ONE-GAL WAR AGAINST THE DARKEST TERROR EVER TO ATTACK THE UNITED STATES. THE ORDER OF THE SCARLET CRAB! EXERTING THEIR CRUEL SCIENTIFIC MAGIC, YAKI SU AND HIS THUGS HYPNOTIZE DAUGHTERS INTO MURDERING THEIR OWN FATHERS, LOYAL SOLDIERS INTO DISGRACING THEIR FLAG.

New

LIKE BIRDS OF PREY THEY DARTED OUT OF THE BRIGHT AUSTRALIAN SKY, RIPPED A SQUADRON OF BRONING MITSUBISHIS, THEN VANISHED... THE PHANTOM FALCONS! NO STRANGER, MORE GLORIOUS SKY-FIGHTER SQUADRON EVER EXISTED THAN THIS ODD CREW. CULLED FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE, BUT EVERY LAST ONE A FIGHTING HELLION...OR SHE-DEVIL.

New

THE U.S.N.'S FIRST TWO-MAN SUB DIVES INTO ACTION CARRYING RECKLESS ENSIGN "HECK" DEWEY AND HIS SIDEKICK, CHIEF GUNNER'S MATE SWENSEN, WHO LOVES A BATTLE THE WAY A DOG LOVES TO BITE. FOLLOW THEM ON THEIR WILD FORAYS AGAINST HITLER'S UNDERSEA WOLF-PACK THAT PLY THE HURRICANE-SWEPT FLORIDA COAST.

New

IT'S TERRIFIC! GET YOUR COPY TODAY

RANGERS COMICS!

A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

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THE NEXT ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS (No. 20, SEPT.) WILL BE ON SALE AT YOUR NEWSSTAND JULY 10th.

MARS
GOD of WAR
BY ROSS GALLUN
HIGH ON HIS HIDEOUS THRONE OF DEATH, MARS, GOD OF WAR, PLOTS TO LOOSE THE EVILS OF HIS WARPED MIND ON THE STRUGGLING UNIVERSE.

I WILL HAVE A TEMPLE BUILT IN MY HONOR!

THE PLANETOID, ROMUS, IS LOCATED AT THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE! MY TEMPLE WILL BE BUILT THERE!

MEANWHILE, ON ROMUS, WEDDING BELLS ARE ABOUT TO RING!
DRINK WITH ME, SISTER! SOON YOU WILL BE PRINCESS OF ROMUS.
THANK YOU, RUTHA! TO THE HEALTH OF MY FUTURE HUSBAND...THE PRINCE!

ONE SIP OF WINE AND THE BRIDE FALLS.
THE DRUG WORKED! NOW TO TAKE HER PLACE!
HA! SHE DRUGGED HER OWN SISTER! I'LL ENTER HER BODY!

A FEW MINUTES LATER.
THE PRINCE IS WAITING.
SO AM I!

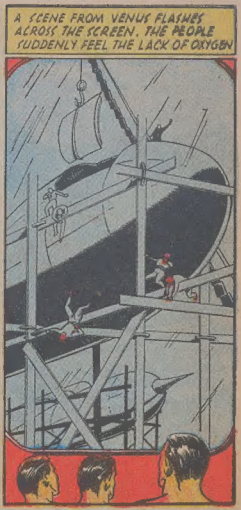
AFTER THE CEREMONY, THE PRINCE TURNS TO HIS BRIDE.
I'LL RAISE YOUR VEIL! WHAT? IT'S RUTHA!
MY SISTER IS TOO WEAK TO RULE! I TOOK HER PLACE.

RUTHA FACES HER SUBJECTS.
THROW HIM IN THE TOWER! I WILL RULE THE UNIVERSE.
SHE IS MAD! I AM YOUR RULER!

THE BLAZING RED EYES OF MARS DEMAND OBEDIENCE FROM THE PEOPLE.
I WILL BUILD A TEMPLE! AWAY WITH HIM!
RUTHA IS OUR LEADER.
LET ME GO!
WE'LL OBEY HER!

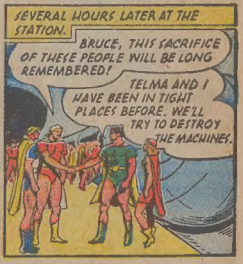
SEVERAL WEEKS LATER...
THE OXYGEN DESTROYING MACHINES ARE READY...
GOOD! THEY WILL MAKE ME MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE! START THEM UP!

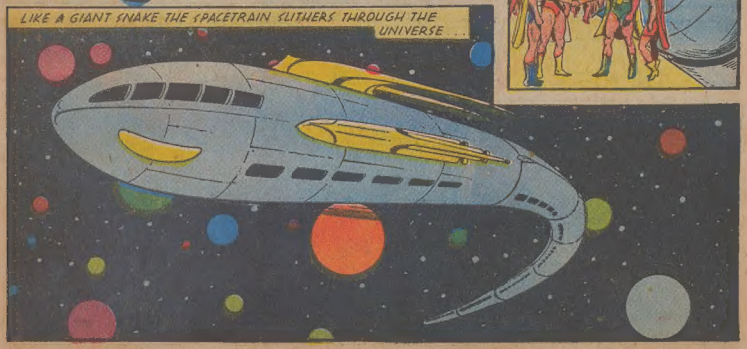
MEANWHILE, ON EARTH.
I HAVE JUST RECEIVED A THREAT FROM RUTHA, PRINCESS OF ROMUS! SHE DEMANDS 50 MEN AND 50 WOMEN FROM OUR PLANET
TUNE IN VENUS ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN! THEY HAVE REFUSED TO SEND ANY OF THEIR PEOPLE.


A SCENE FROM VENUS FLASHES ACROSS THE SCREEN. THE PEOPLE SUDDENLY FEEL THE LACK OF OXYGEN

SUDDENLY, THE SCENE FADES AND RUTHA LEERS DOWN ON THE EARTH PEOPLE FROM THE SCREEN.
I BROKE IN ON THE BEAM! DARE YOU REFUSE TO MEET MY DEMANDS?

TWO FAMED SPACE EXPLORERS STEP FORWARD.
I'VE CAN'T STAND BY AND SEE OUR CIVILIZATION PERISH... I'LL GO!
WE'LL ALL GO!
SO WILL I!


SEVERAL HOURS LATER AT THE STATION.
BRUCE, THIS SACRIFICE OF THESE PEOPLE WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED!
TELMA AND I HAVE BEEN IN TIGHT PLACES BEFORE. WE'LL TRY TO DESTROY THE MACHINES.


LIKE A GIANT SNAKE THE SPACETRAIN SLITHERS THROUGH THE UNIVERSE...

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, THE HOSTAGES ARRIVE ON ROMUS.

YOUR PLANET WAS WISE TO SEND SLAVES! YOU WILL BUILD THE TEMPLE!

SOME DAY YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS CRIME.

DRIVEN BY THEIR CRUEL MASTER, THE SLAVES TOIL CEASELESSLY AT THEIR WEARY TASK OF BUILDING THE TEMPLE ATOP THE SMOKING VOLCANO.

AS EACH FOUNDATION STONE IS DROPPED IN PLACE, RUTHA OFFERS A HUMAN SACRIFICE.

THE TEMPLE MUST BE BUILT ON BLOOD...THROW HIM IN!

WHEN THESE SLAVES ARE USED UP I'LL DEMAND MORE!

NOOOOOO

LATER RUTHA WATCHES BRUCE AND TELMA...

TELMA AND BRUCE MUST BE IN LOVE...I'LL GET RID OF HER.

AS THE TEMPLE NEARS COMPLETION, A DAY IS SET ASIDE FOR FEASTING.

TOMORROW WE'LL HAVE THE GLADIATORIAL GAMES! TELMA WILL REPRESENT EARTH! TAKE THE STRONGEST REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH OF THE OTHER PLANETS!

THE GUARDS SPECULATE ON THE CONTEST.

THE EARTHWOMAN WON'T LAST TEN MINUTES WITH THE MEN FROM SATURN AND JUPITER!

I'LL BET FIFTY GLADS ON THE BRUTE FROM NEPTUNE...COME WE HAVE WORK TO DO!

YOU ARE PICKED TO BE ONE OF THE GLADIATORS!

WHAT?

LET ME TAKE HER PLACE!

NEXT DAY IN THE ARENA, TELMA REFUSES TO LOOK AT RUTHA'S BLAZING RED EYES.
GLADIATORS!.. LOOK INTO MY EYES!..KNOW THAT YOU ARE TO KILL! THE SURVIVOR WILL BE HONORED!
AT THE SIGNAL, THE GLADIATORS HURL THEMSELVES AT EACH OTHER..
STOP!
I'LL PROVE THAT THE MEN OF JUPITER ARE THE STRONGEST!
I'M FROM PLUTO! NO MAN CAN STAND UP TO ME!
THE JUPITERIAN ATTACKS TELMA
I'LL HAVE TO KILL HIM OR BE KILLED!
EARTHWOMAN! BAH!
AHHH!
TWO GLADIATORS HURL THEMSELVES AT HER!
THEY ARE POSSESSED WITH THE DEVIL!
NIMBLY, SHE LEAPS ASIDE, AS THE GLADIATORS DRIVE THEIR SWORDS HOME.
OHHH!
UGGHH!
SHE HAS WON! THROW HER IN THE TOWER! BRING THE BODIES OF THE DYING TO THE TEMPLE!

THE CRATER OF THE VOLCANO, ON WHICH THE TEMPLE WAS BUILT, SMOLDERS BEFORE A HIDEOUS THRONE.
PUT THEM THERE!
THE BODIES GROUPED TO HER SATISFACTION, RUTHA SUDDENLY SHOOTS A BEAM AT THEM.
THEY HARDEN TO STONE!.. IT IS A FITTING BACKGROUND FOR THE THRONE! THE EMPTY SPACE IS RESERVED FOR TELMA.
MEANWHILE TELMA IS TAKEN TO THE TOWER.
HERE'S ANOTHER ONE TO KEEP YOU COMPANY.
TOMORROW YOU WILL ADORN OUR TEMPLE
ANOTHER PRISONER?
AND LASHES AT HER CAPTORS.
FIENDS!
STOP!
THE PRINCE LEAPS TO HER AID.
I'LL TAKE A HAND!
OHHH!
SUDDENLY, SHE GRABS A SWORD FROM ONE OF THE GUARDS.
I'LL TAKE THIS!
WHAT?
HAVING DISPOSED OF THE GUARDS, TELMA LEADS THEM FROM THE TOWER.
HIDE IN THE TEMPLE! I'LL FIND BRUCE!
WE'LL DO AS YOU SAY!
TELMA RUNS THROUGH THE STREETS...
...AND ARRIVES AT THE SLAVE QUARTERS!
TELMA! THEY'VE GOT YOU!
OHHH-BRUCE! DON'T LOOK INTO RUTHA'S EYES!
WE'VE GOT HER!

OVERPOWERED, TELMA IS DRAGGED TO THE TEMPLE.
WE FOUND HER AT THE SLAVES' QUARTERS TALKING TO THE EARTH LEADER.
I'LL COME DOWN AND TAKE CARE OF HER.
PLACE HER THERE! I'LL TURN HER INTO STONE AND COMPLETE THE STATUE!
MEANWHILE, THE PRINCE PEERS FROM THE SHADOWS.
IT'S THE GIRL WHO RESCUED US FROM THE TOWER! WE MUST SAVE HER!
UGGHH!
SEEING HIS CHANCE HE HURLS HIMSELF ON RUTHA.
DEVIL- I'LL STOP YOU!
MY PEOPLE WILL CAST OFF YOUR EVIL POWER!
SEIZE HIM!
STILL UNDER THE SPELL OF MARS' BLAZING RED EYES, THE GUARDS OBEY RUTHA'S COMMAND.
WE'VE GOT HIM!
SHE WON'T USE THAT GUN AGAIN!
AS THE RAY GUN FALLS INTO THE CRATER, THE LAVA SURGES UPWARD!
LOOK! THE VOLCANO IS OVERFLOWING!
FEAR NOT! IT WILL SUBSIDE!

LOOK!... IT RECEDES!... SEE THAT NOTHING EVER FALLS IN AGAIN!
SHE IS INDEED POWERFUL!
BRING THAT EARTHMAN IN! I WILL MARRY HIM NOW!
A FEW MINUTES LATER, AT THE PRISON.
EARTHMAN, WE HAVE BROUGHT YOUR WEDDING ROBE!
THE PRINCESS HAS LOOKED UPON YOU WITH FAVOR!
BRUCE IS PREPARED FOR THE WEDDING
THIS IS THE CHANCE I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR
HE IS READY!
YOU'LL NEVER BE MY BEST MAN!
UFFF!
IT'S AN OLD EARTH CUSTOM!
LAST ROUND!
NOW TO FREE THE SLAVES AND START A REVOLT!

FREEING THE SLAVES, BRUCE LEADS THEM FROM
FOLLOW ME!
ENRAGED AT THE TREATMENT THEY RECEIVED, THE MOB SWEEPS ALL BEFORE IT
HALT!
ON... ON!
THE GUARDS ARE TRAMPLED UNDER THE CHARGING MOB.
TO THE TEMPLE!
IN THE TEMPLE
THE SLAVES HAVE ESCAPED! THEY ARE COMING TO KILL US!
DON'T FEAR! I'LL HANDLE THEM!
THE MOB LEAPS UP THE TEMPLE STEPS!
STOP!
SLAVES! RETURN TO YOUR WORK!
RUTHA'S BLAZING RED EYES HOLD THEM SPELL-BOUND
TELMA TOLD ME NOT TO LOOK AT HER FACE! SHE MUST BE CAPTURED!
GO BACK!

FRIGHTENED WHEN BRUCE REFUSES TO OBEY HER COMMAND, RUTHA FLEES.
GUARDS! GUARDS!
THEY WON'T SAVE YOU!
OVERTAKING HER, BRUCE LIFTS THE STRUGGLING PRINCESS ABOVE HIS HEAD
NOOOO
SHE DEVIL!
. AND HURLS HER INTO THE SMOKING CRATER
EEEEHH
VOMITING FIRE, SMOKE, AND LAVA, THE VOLCANO BURSTS ASUNDER, SCATTERING DEATH AND DESTRUCTION OVER THE PLANETOID.
THE SPACE-TRAIN! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!
LATER, ON THE SPACE TRAIN.
ROMUS IS DESTROYED!
BUT WE HAVE SAVED MOST OF THE PEOPLE AND FREED THE UNIVERSE FROM SLAVERY!
THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO BRING THE UNIVERSE TO ITS KNEES!.. I WILL FIND IT!
MARS, GOD OF WAR, BREWS NEW HATRED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

REEF RYAN

BY HUGH FITZHUGH

REEF RYAN, EXPLORER, IS IN THE WEIRD WORLD INCIDE NEPTUNE.
SURE AN' I'D LIKE TO SINK ME TEETH IN A GOOD, JUICY STEAK, KING NEPON!
I'VE HEARD ABOUT THEM, REEF- THEY MUST BE GOOD!
BUT WE'LL SOON BE LUCKY TO HAVE ANY FOOD AT ALL HERE IN CORAAM... OUR UNDER-SEA SUPPLY IS FAST FAIL-ING!
ISN'T THERE ANY OTHER SOURCE OF VITTLES IN ALL NEPTUNE?
THERE IS A LAND TO X-WARD, BUT NO ONE WHO HAS GONE THERE HAS EVER RETURNED TO TELL ABOUT IT!
I'LL RISK IT! MAYBE MY LUCK WILL BE BETTER THAN THEIRS!

AT ONCE REEF PREPARES FOR THE TRIP
I GUESS I'VE GOT EVERYTHING DRIED OCTOFISH, PARCHED SEA-GRAIN, DEHY-DRATED WATER CAPSULES, RAY PISTOL AN' ME TRUSTY HARPOON GUN!
AN' EVEN IF I DON'T LET BACK ALIVE I'LL LET NEPON KNOW WHAT I FIND OUT. A FEW OF THESE HOMING KWAHS WILL DO THE TRICK!
NEPON'S DAUGHTER, VARA, RUSHES IN WITH ZOTH AND KOAB, YOUNG CORAAMITES
REEF! THAT VILLAIN MORDAS KRAD HAS ESCAPED HIS GUARDS AND NO TRACE CAN BE FOUND OF HIM!
THIS MEANS TROUBLE!
WHERE COULD HE GO? THE CAVES ARE PATROLED!
THERE'S NO PLACE UNDERSEA... THE AMPHINS HATE HIM!
I'M THINKIN' HE'S HEADED THE WAY I'M GOIN'!
RYAN, LET US GO WITH YOU!
PLEASE, REEF!
SORRY, PALS, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU RISK YOUR LIVES - THIS IS A ONE-MAN JOB!
SOON REEF LEAVES ON HIS PERILOUS LONE QUEST.
UNSEEN BY RYAN, VARA, ZOTH, AND KOAB START AFTER HIM
LATER
HOT ROCKETS! THERE'S A YAAR! WE'LL BE GOOD EATIN' IF I CAN GET HIM BEFORE HE GETS ME!

I'VE NEVER INCREASED ONE OF THESE BABIES BUT THE OLD HARPOON GUN OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK!
BULL'S-EYE! BUT WHAT THE--? THE PARALYZING BLAST ISN'T WORKING!
SOMEHOW THE YAAR'S HIDE MUST NEUTRALIZE THE CURRENT... NOW I'M IN FOR IT!
MY CABLE HAS ALL PAYED OUT... THE TRICKY DIVIL'S DIVING UNDER ME BOAT!
I CAN'T LOSE ME GUN THERE I GO!
REEF STARTS THE AUTOMATIC REEL AND SWIMS FOR THE YAAR!
IT'S TOO LATE TO BACK OUT NOW!
THE YAAR GLIDES TOWARD HIM, CRUEL JAWS AGAPE!

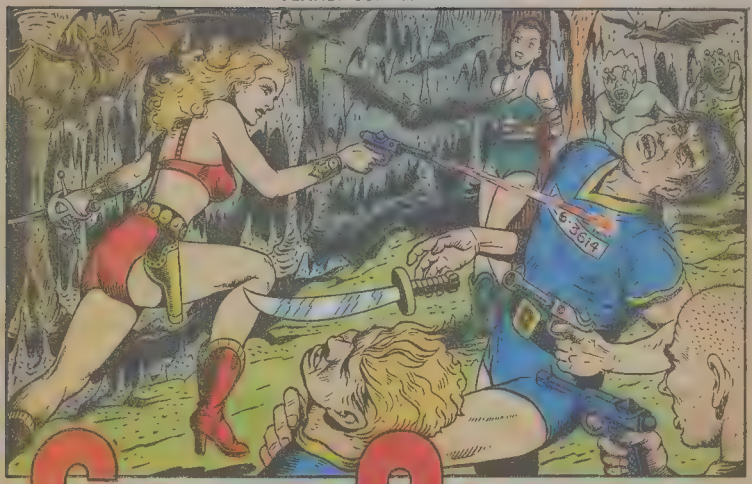
REEF DUCKS THE DEADLY DOUBLE ROWS OF RAZOR-SHARP TEETH AND PLUNGES HIS BLADE INTO THE MONSTER AGAIN AND AGAIN... IN A CLOUD OF SWIRLING MURKY BLOOD THE YAAR FLAILS IN HIS DEATH THROES
ON THE SURFACE A NEW PERIL FACES RYAN. A JLUMA, HUGE NEPTUNIAN JELLYFISH, IS FASTENING ON HIS CANOE.
LASHING THE DEAD YAAR TO A CHUNK OF FLOATING CORAA, REEF KNIFES THROUGH THE WATER...
IF THAT JLUMA SINKS ME BOAT, I'M A GONER!
BUT REEF STRUGGLES IN VAIN AGAINST THE CRAWLING, STRANGLING MASS. HE CAN'T BREATHE. ALL GOES BLACK
AAAGH! THE NASTY CHUNK OF DIVIL'S GLUE IS GRABBIN' ON TO ME! LET LOOSE YE FOUL BEAST!

HOURS LATER REEF COMES TO.
WHERE AM I? VARA. KOAB ZOTH. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE JLUMA...
TAKE IT EASY, REEF! WE WERE FOLLOWING AND CAME UP JUST IN TIME TO GET YOU AWAY FROM THE JLUMA. WE SAVED YOUR GUN AND THE YAAR. BUT THE JLUMA GOT YOUR BOAT!
NOW CAN WE GO WITH YOU, REEF?
I GUESS IT'S MY TURN TO ASK THAT, VARA!
LET'S GO!
FINALLY, THEY SIGHT LAND!
OH! I NEVER SAW SUCH A SINISTER, GLOOMY PLACE!
YOU'RE RIGHT, VARA, BUT MAYBE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAINS.
THEY REACH THE BOAT ON THE ROCKY SHORE.
REEF, LOOK AT THIS WRECK!
IT'S A CORAAM BOAT. AND HASN'T BEEN HERE LONG!
HEADING FOR THE WEIRD MOUNTAINS, THEY CROSS A DESOLATE, BARREN DESERT.
LOOK AT THOSE BONES! AMPHINS, CORAAMITES, AND THOSE STRANGE SIX-LEGGED SKELETONS!
AS THEY RUSH INTO THE BLACK, JAGGED CRAGS...
WHAT'S THAT STRANGE MOANING AHEAD?
LOOK! COWERING IN THAT LITTLE CAVE... MORDAS KRAD!
R-RYAN! SAVE ME! D-DON'T LET THAT M-MONSTER GET ME!
WHAT MONSTER?
IT'S GONE? BE C-CAREFUL...IT WAS H-HERE A M-MINUTE AGO... HORRIBLE... HAIRY... I C-CAN'T TALK ABOUT IT...

RYAN, WE WERE ENEMIES ONCE, BUT FORGIVE MY EVIL DEEDS... I CAME HERE TO START A NEW LIFE LET ME JOIN YOU!
WE CAN'T LEAVE YOU HERE TO STARVE OR BE KILLED... GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE A CHANCE ON YOU, KRAD.
AS THEY TRAVEL INTO THE MOUNTAINS THERE FALLS ONE OF THE IRREGULAR "NIGHTS" OF NEPTUNE'S INNER WORLD.. CAUSED BY A PLANETOID, COMET, OR ANOTHER PLANET CASTING A SHADOW ON NEPTUNE'S PHOSPHORLUSCENT SURFACE...
WE DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT'LL LAST... WE'D BETTER CAMP IN THAT CANYON AHEAD!
IT IS DARK WHEN THEY REACH THE NARROW RAVINE.
I'LL STAND GUARD, RYAN! IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO...
GOOD STUFF, MORDAS.. BUT STAY WITHIN CALL IN CASE YOU RUN INTO TROUBLE!
BUT KRAD STEALS SILENTLY AWAY FROM HIS POST...
WHO KNOWS WHAT LIES BEYOND THAT CREST?
BEHOLD! AND I AM THE FIRST TO SEE IT! IT WILL ALL BE MINE! MORDAS KRAD WILL RULE!
STRETCHED OUT BEFORE KRAD'S GREEDY EYES IS A STRANGE AND GLOWING LAND OF PLENTY!
PLOTTING, HE HURRIES BACK TO THE RAVINE'S STOP...
THIS BOULDER IS JUST WHAT I NEED! IT WILL CRUSH THAT FOOL RYAN AND HIS FRIENDS!

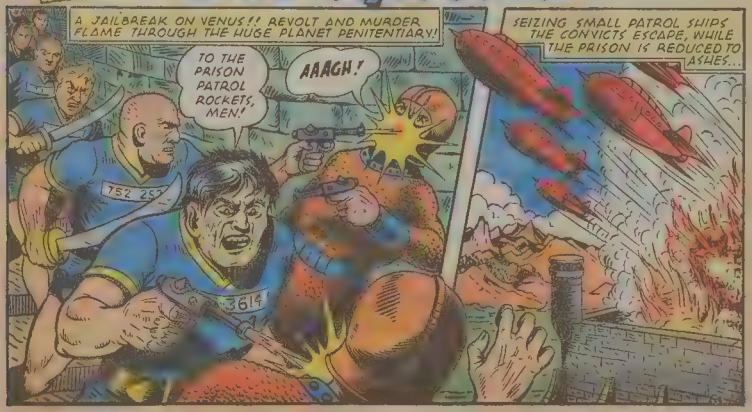
BUT FROM BEHIND KRAD, LONG HAIRY ARMS REACH OUT...
ONE PUSH AND... AAAGH!
REEF! REEF! SAVE ME! WE'RE BEING ATTACKED!
IN THE GROWING LIGHT OF "DAWN" REEF, ZOTH, AND KOAB WAKE AND RUSH TO AID THE TERRIFIED KRAD!
GREAT SCOTT! THEY'RE LIKE HUGE SPIDERS!
LOOK AT THAT WEB! WE'RE TRAPPED!
WE CAN'T REACH HIM IN TIME!
THE WEBS ARE TOO STRONG!
IT'S TOO LATE. THEY'VE GOT HIM!
NO WONDER NOBODY EVER RETURNED ALIVE. THIS IS A DEATH-TRAP! WHAT'S THAT? VARA!
TWO OF THE MONSTERS SEPARATE VARA FROM THE MEN. SHE RACES FOR THE GREAT WEB!
FRANTICALLY VARA CLIMBS THE APPARENTLY DESERTED WEB AND DOESN'T SEE THE GIANT TARSPID SIDLE OUT BEHIND HER!
THAT TAKES CARE OF ONE OF YOU. HOLD ON, VARA, I'M COMING!

REEF, KOAB, AND ZOTH RAGE INTO THE SAVAGE TARSPID, PITTING DESPERATE RAGE AGAINST CRUEL STRENGTH!
AS REEF DRAGS HIMSELF UP TO THE STICKY STRANDS TOWARD VARA, THE GIANT MONSTER GRABS HER...
REEF!
A BLAST FROM REEF'S RAY PISTOL SHATTERS ONE HAIRY ARM. INSANE WITH PAIN AND RAGE THE HUGE TARSPID DROPS THE STRUGGLING GIRL.
WITH A SAVAGE SWEEP, THE TARSPID KNOCKS THE RAY GUN FROM RYAN'S HAND
MY GUN! NOW I HAVE ONLY ONE CHANCE!
REEF DRIVES A PARALYZING LEFT HOOK INTO THE MONSTER'S SOLAR PLEXUS!
IF HE EVER GOT THOSE CLAWS ON ME...
AS THE TARSPID DROPS TO THE GROUND, REEF JUMPS DOWN AND...
THE BATTLE IS OVER... CUTTING THE WEB, THEY START OUT ONCE MORE!
REEF, YOU BROKE THAT HORRIBLE BEAST'S NECK WHEN YOU HIT HIM! HE WAS GOING TO...
FORGET IT, VARA... LOOK! WE'RE THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS!
AHEAD OF THEM LIES THE SHINING COUNTRY!
OH, REEF, IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
THE FUTURE OF CORAAM IS SAVED!
BUT STRANGE ADVENTURES AWAIT REEF IN THIS MYSTERIOUS LAND IN THE NEXT THRILLING ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!



GALE ALLEN and the GIRL SQUADRON

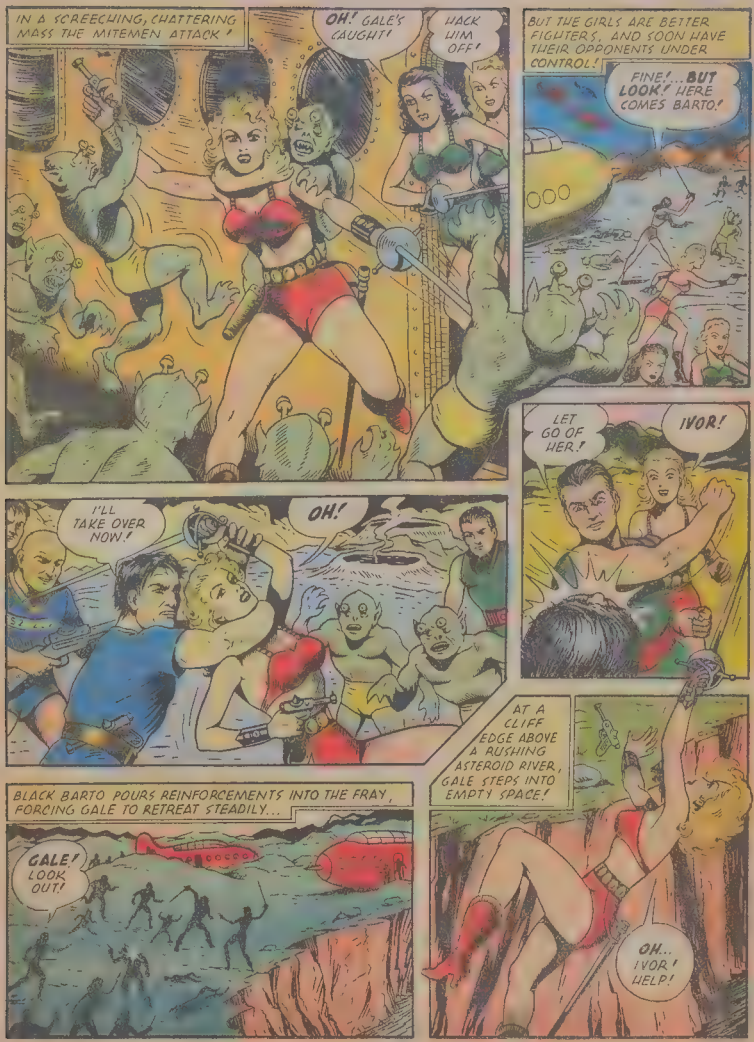
BY Douglas McKee


A JAILBREAK ON VENUS!! REVOLT AND MURDER FLAME THROUGH THE HUGE PLANET PENITENTIARY!
TO THE PRISON PATROL ROCKETS, MEN!
AAAGH!
SEIZING SMALL PATROL SHIPS THE CONVICTS ESCAPE, WHILE THE PRISON IS REDUCED TO ASHES...
752 257
3614

THE CRIMINAL LEADER, BLACK BARTO, PLANS NEW EVIL...
BACK TO OUR VULTURE BAT ASTEROID NEAR SATURN! THE MITEMEN WILL JOIN US IN SKY-RAIDING!
BUT GALE ALLEN, FOLLOWING THE SKY LANES WITH THE GIRL SQUADRON, INTERCEPTS BARTO'S MESSAGE TO HIS FLEET...
THAT ASTEROID'S RIGHT ON THE CARGO LINES! WE'VE GOT TO STOP THIS!
HEAD FOR BARTO'S BASE! BUCCANEERING IS OUTLAWED HERE!
LIEUTENANT LURA, TAKE OUR RECONNAISSANCE ROCKET AND TRAIL BARTO'S FLEET!
RIGHT!
INSTANTLY LURA ZOOMS OUT OF A VENT IN THE MAIN CRAFT'S HULL...
SHE CRUISES VAINLY FOR AN HOUR WHEN SUDDENLY...
OH-OH! THERE'S BARTO'S MOB!
A SWIFT STREAM OF RAY FIRE BLASTS LURA'S CRAFT TO A HELPLESS HULK
THE RUDDER'S GONE, AND MY MOTOR'S STOPPED!
BUT BLACK BARTO DROPS A SAFETY NET TO HAUL LURA AROUND HIS ROCKET.
WELL! GALE ALLEN'S LIEUTENANT... THIS IS MY CHANCE TO REPAY HER FOR HER INTEREST IN MY AFFAIRS.
THE INTEREST THAT PUT ME IN JAIL! YOU, LITTLE BEAUTY, ARE GOING TO BE DESSERT FOR THE VULTURE-BATS ON MY ASTEROID!
AHA! HOW FORTUNATE! WE CAN BAG OUR FIRST PREY RIGHT NOW!
GALE! GALE! BLACK BARTO OH! YOU'VE SMASHED MY WRIST RADIO!
6-3614

BLACK BARTO STREAKS TO HIS ASTEROID AND
MITEMEN! A PRISONER FOR YOU!
IN A DANK CAVE, HIDEOUS, DWARFED CREATURES LASH LURA TO A STALAGMITE STAKE
OUR VULTURE BAT PETS WILL ENJOY THIS!
SUDDENLY
BARIO! CARGO CONVOY ON THE SPACE LANE!
ATTACK AT ONCE!
WITHOUT WARNING BARIO'S SWIFT ROCKETS SURROUND THE SLOWER SHIPS OF A CARGO CLIPPER FLEET.
WE'RE MADE! THIS ONE RAID MAKES US ALL MILLIONAIRES!
BUT ONE CLIPPER PILOT CRASHES HIS SHIP INTO A PIRATE CRAFT RATHER THAN SURRENDER HIS CARGO
BAILING OUT IN HIS SAFETY ROCKET, HE HURTLES AMIDST CRASHING CLIPPERS AND DYING PILOTS...
JUST THEN, GALE ARRIVES
LOOK! A MAN IN A SAFETY ROCKET! DIVE TO PICK HIM UP!

SAFE IN GALE'S SHIP, THE MAN TELLS HIS STORY..
I'M IVOR, THE OWNER OF THAT CARGO CLIPPER LINE... WE WERE AMBUSHED BY BLACK BARTO!
HE CAPTURED MY LIEUTENANT, LURA... IVOR, WE'LL TAKE A SHORT CUT THROUGH THE ASTEROID BELT AND ATTACK HIM FROM BEHIND!
DODGING WHIRLING ASTEROIDS, GALE PLUNGES AHEAD...
SUDDENLY...
OH...OH! IT'S BARTO'S FLEET LYING IN WAIT FOR US!
DON'T LET HER GET AWAY! SHOOT TO KILL!
DOES HE THINK HE CAN TRAP US? WE'LL SHOW HIM!
BUT...
WE'RE HIT. HAVE TO LAND!
BARTO'S FOLLOWING US DOWN! HE'S FORCING US TO THIS ASTEROID!
AS GALE STEPS OUT OF HER PANCAKED SHIP..
OH!... BARTO'S MITEMEN!
FOOD FOR OUR VULTURE BATS!


IN A SCREECHING, CHATTERING MASS THE MITEMEN ATTACK!
OH! GALE'S CAUGHT!
HACK HIM OFF!
BUT THE GIRLS ARE BETTER FIGHTERS, AND SOON HAVE THEIR OPPONENTS UNDER CONTROL!
FINE!.. BUT LOOK! HERE COMES BARTO!
LET GO OF HER!
IVOR!
I'LL TAKE OVER NOW!
OH!
AT A CLIFF EDGE ABOVE A RUSHING ASTEROID RIVER, GALE STEPS INTO EMPTY SPACE!
OH... IVOR! HELP!
BLACK BARTO POURS REINFORCEMENTS INTO THE FRAY, FORCING GALE TO RETREAT STEADILY...
GALE! LOOK OUT!

POWERFUL TORRENTS AND EDDIES SWEEP GALE INTO THE YAWNING MOUTH OF A CAVERN
THE VULTURE BAT CAVE!
BATTLING THE FURIOUS UNDERTOW, GALE DRAGS HERSELF UP ON A PROJECTING ROCK...
BRR... THIS CAVERN GIVES ME THE CREEPS!
UH-OH! HERE COMES TROUBLE — A VULTURE BAT!
THE CREATURE ZOOMS AND PARRIES LIKE A TINY WARPLANE. BUT FINALLY...
THERE! I'LL CHOKE YOU!
WHAT'S ALL THAT NOISE? THERE'S A CRACK FOR ME TO PEEK THROUGH.
BELOW, BLACK BARTO THREATENS THE CAPTIVE GIRL SQUADRON AND IVOR WITH A HUGE, NICKED KNIFE
I'LL JUST CARVE MY "X" ON YOU AND THE VULTURE BATS WILL DO THE REST. THEY WANT FRESH BLOOD!
YOU HEATHEN DOG!
BARTO THINKS I PERISHED IN THE RIVER SO HE JUST PARKED HIS GUN...
INSTANTLY, GALE FIRES A WITHERING BLAST AT THE VILLAINS.
IF THE BATS WANT FRESH BLOOD, THEY CAN HAVE BARTO'S!
THE BATS SWARM GREEDILY TO ATTACK THEIR OWN WOUNDED MASTERS!
YOU'RE FREE, IVOR! HELP WITH THE GIRLS!
QUICK! TAKE THE PRISON PATROL ROCKETS! BARTO AND HIS CREW ARE DONE FOR!
I'LL BE NO LONGER IN JAIL THE MOON!
GALE ALLEN AMAZES YOU WITH ANOTHER HAIR-RAISING THRILLER IN PLANET COMICS' NEXT ISSUE...

AURO
Lord of Jupiter

BY DICK CHARICS

FIERCE, METAL-ARMORED PYGMIES OVERRUN AURO'S PLANET JUNGLE CITY, AND DOOM HOVERS OVER HIS PEOPLE, UNTIL HE SETS OUT TO FIND THE MAD MONSTER TO WHOM THE TINY WARRIORS GIVE ALLEGIANCE. .
THE POPULATION APPEALS TO AURO FOR AID AGAINST THE PYGMY INVADERS.
OH, HELP..PLEASE! THESE MONSTERS ARE CARRYING OFF OUR BABIES!
I'LL PUT AN END TO THIS TERROR!
THE RAY GUNS OF AURO'S PEOPLE HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE BLOODTHIRSTY PYGMIES.
NO! NO! THE BABIES!

THAT PYGMY SEEMS TO BE STALKING ME!
The LITTLE WARRIOR RUSHES AT AURO, AND. . . .
DIDN'T EXPECT THIS, DID YOU?
YOU'RE STRONG FOR YOUR SIZE, BUT NOT STRONG ENOUGH!
I CAN'T PIERCE THAT ARMOR!
BUT AURO FINDS A VULNERABLE SPOT. . . .
A-R-R-R-G-H!
And. . .
AH-AH. . .
THAT THRUST IN THE NECK DID IT. . HE'S TRYING TO REACH HIS HOME BEFORE HE DIES. . I'LL FOLLOW AND SEE WHERE HE CAME FROM!
SUDDENLY, A PIERCING SHRIEK REACHES AURO'S EARS.
E-E-E-A-H!
WHAT'S THAT?

HELP!
A GIRL! SHE'S TRAPPED IN A NET OF VINES!
I AM LOLA.. WHILE WALKING THIS WAY TO INVESTIGATE THE QUEER SMOKE AND LIGHTS COMING FROM THE MOUNTAIN YONDER, I FELL INTO THIS TRAP!
THE PYGMIES MUST HAVE SET THAT TRAP. WE'D BETTER GET AWAY BEFORE THEY COME BACK TO CLAIM THEIR PREY.
ON THE CENTER OF THE MOUNTAIN CRATER..
I, TOR, SHALL REPAY THOSE JUPITERIANS FOR EXILING ME. I WILL TEACH THEM TO SNEER AT MY SCIENCE!
MY PYGMY PEOPLE WILL DESTROY THE WHOLE PLANET!
AURO AND LOLA APPROACH WHAT SEEMS TO BE A SEETHING VOLCANO.
SEE! THERE!
LOOK! THE PYGMY I WOUNDED IS HEADING FOR THE CRATER!
HE DROPPED RIGHT INTO IT!
WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S IN THAT CRATER!

THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A TUNNEL LEADING TO THE CENTER. WE'LL HAVE TO CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN!
WE'RE HALF WAY UP NOW!
LOOK! THERE'S A FLIGHT OF STAIRS!
THESE OUGHT TO LEAD SOMEWHERE!
SUDDENLY, THE WHOLE STAIRCASE GIVES WAY, AND LOLA TOPPLES INTO A DEEP PIT. . .
OOOH-H-H
A GIANT OCTO-REPTILE WRIGGLES TOWARD HER AND POISES TO STRIKE. . .
But Suddenly. . .
I MUST GET MY KNIFE INTO HIS DOJGHY SKULL!
THAT DOES IT!

UGH! WHAT A HORRIBLE EXPERIENCE THAT WAS!
SOON, AURO AND LOLA REACH THE PEAK OF THE MOUNTAIN AND LOOK DOWN INTO A HUGE CRATER. . .
WHY. . THERE'S A MAN STANDING OVER THAT HUGE CAULDRON! THAT'S WHERE THE SMOKE IS COMING FROM!
AURO TURNS IN THE NICK OF TIME AND, STANDING ON THE EDGE OF THE CRATER, BATTLES THE PYGMIES. . . . .
PYGMIES RETURNING FROM THEIR WORK OF DESTR-C-TION SIGHT AURO AND LOLA.
JUPITERIANS! KILL!
AURO WILL REVENGE THE JUPITERIANS!
IN THE MEANTIME, LOLA FACES ANOTHER OCTO-REPTILE.
OH-H-H!
TERROR-STRICKEN, SHE RACES BLINDLY AWAY..
HELP! AURO! HELP!
AND FALLS INTO THE CRATER...

I JUST HAPPENED TO REMEMBER YOU CREATURES WERE UNPROTECTED AT THE THROAT!
The PYGMIES ELIMINATED AURO LEAPS TO THE RESCUE. . . .
I MUST SAVE LOLA!
IF HE COMES CLOSE, I WILL TOSS YOU INTO THE BOILING CAULDRON!
AURO'S FOOT STRIKES A LOOSE ROCK.
THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA!
A PEFECTLY-AIMED KICK UPSETS THE CAULDRON. . .
THERE IT GOES!
THICK VAPORS RISE, AND A SUDDEN RUMBLING COMES FROM THE CORE OF THE CRATER.
THIS VOLCANO IS EXTINCT. IT'LL ERUPT ANY MINUTE!

I WILL NOT BE SAVED BY SUCH COWARDLY, JUPITERIAN DOG! I WILL DIE TO THAT!
BUT—IT IS TOR, THE MAD FIEND, BEHIND ALL THIS!
I'LL K-KILL Y-YOU!
A GEYSER SPOUTS UPWARD FROM THE GROUND.
YOU MADE THE CRATER. . NOW LIE IN IT!
AND TOR IS SWALLOWED BY A POOL OF HOT, MOLTEN LAVA.
WE JUST MADE IT! THERE GOES THE VOLCANO!
TOR TRIED TO DESTROY THE WORLD HE HATED BY CREATING AN ARMY OF PYGMIES WHOM HE HAD ENSLAVED WITH DRUGS. NOW THAT HE IS DEAD, THEY WILL BE A THREAT TO JUPITER NO LONGER!

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VALLEY OF DEATH

King Regna's face showed deep concern as Jeff Drake came alone into the shadowed council room. A great deal would depend upon the observation Drake and his scouts had made of the usurper Queen Morla's patrol under the ruthless leadership of the renegade Earthman, Redmond.

Jeff Drake stood crisply at attention, a sparkle of mirth in his keen, determined eyes. "It's now or never," he said firmly. "If your people wait any longer for an offensive against the tyrant Queen, their fighting spirits will not flame with such reckless courage. Tonight is the moment to strike. My men, Woodruff and Bragen, have already found an unguarded pass through the mountains. When the Saffron Star rises over the western peaks, we will lead your people in a flanking attack. Queen Morla will order her forces to fight to the death, but Redmond will disobey her orders to save his own skin."

"Your plan sounds excellent," the grizzled king exclaimed. "If it succeeds, the battle by the expedition which brought Commander Allers and you from Earth will go down in the history of the Universe as one of the greatest victories over oppression. Great moons! I'm impatient to meet Allers and offer him every aid in refitting his space ships."

"I'm sure you will," Jeff Drake assured him. "But there's not much time, Sir. I will send in your armorer on my way out. Your people must bear every available weapon tonight!"

A slender, beautiful girl, girded and breasted with mail, sprang lithely from a dark niche as Drake ran down the tunnel from the council chamber.

"Jeff! Did my father believe you?"

"Shh!" Drake warned. "Not so loud! If he suspects that Redmond's men hold the pass, he will not give the command tonight."

But suddenly Drake's thoughts were halted abruptly by a shout from the guards at the tunnel mouth. Lustra matched his pace, and in a few moments they stopped breathlessly before the armed guardians of the underground domain.

"Ray fire!" a tall, weather-beaten guard exclaimed. "Your two companions were over in the west pass, weren't they, Drake?"

"Yes," Drake said in voice that betrayed no fear. "But don't worry about those shots. Bragen is probably taking a bit of target practice. He's not used to Parunian ray guns. Princess Lustra and I are on our way to the pass. We'll fire three blasts if anything is wrong."

Drake and Lustra made their way quickly down the slope, and as soon as they were out of the guards' sight they broke into a mad dash.

"Barely an hour before darkness," Drake muttered. "If Redmond's scouts are stationed at the west pass, we'll have to send back a signal to cancel the proposed attack."

"My father will be heart-broken," Lustra replied. "He'd staked all his hopes on joining Commander Allers. Queen Regna and her renegade Earthman would rejoice at the chance to slaughter every soul amongst us. We must not fail!"

"That's the stuff, Lustra. If Woodruff and Bragen are still alive, there's a chance we can outwit Redmond's patrol. Look! There's Bragen now—behind that jagged boulder overhanging the cliff!"

Before Lustra could reply Bragen and Woodruff were sliding down a rope. Bragen, hanging on by one hand, was waving a frantic signal for them to get back against the wall of the pass.

Grabbing Lustra's arm, Drake heeded his friend's signal. And not a moment too soon. For ray-gun bursts were already kicking up the gravel behind them as flashes blazed along the ridge of the pass.

"A whole squad of Morlists!" Drake exclaimed huskily when they reached Bragen and Woodruff. The latter two were licking rope burns on the palms of their hands.

Bragen shook his head grimly. "We haven't a chance to stop them. I guess Regna will have a long wait before he can lead his people to freedom."

"No! We can't fail him now!" Jeff Drake said as he grabbed the Parunian ray rifle which Bragen had dropped. "King Regna will lead his people into the pass before Redmond's legion arrives if we make it tough for those scouts now!"

Lustra, Bragen and Woodruff watched silently as Drake swung the rifle in a slow arc. A muscle twitched on his face when he spotted the lone figure racing down the ridge. Then the rifle steadied in Drake's firm hands and a bolt of flame belched from the bore.

"That will discourage any more of them from going for aid. The Great Sun is already setting, and soon the Saffron Star will rise over the peak. If we can hold off that squad until your father comes, the rest will be easy!"

Bragen drew a ray pistol from his belt, thumbed the safety and made a sweeping gesture toward the rock wall. "Keep the rifle, Jeff. We'll leave Lustra here and creep up on them. Woodruff will go down the line, and I'll climb up the north wall."

Mort Woodruff, shifting his ray rifle to his left hand, held out the other toward Drake. "One of us may not come back. Let's shake. Whatever happens, I know each of us will go down shooting if those Morlists pick us off."

Fear shadowed Lustra's eyes as she watched the gallant trio ascend the perilous wall.

The somber Parunian night was already closing in about her. Shadows flickered through the pass. And above the peak a saffron glow was tinting the sky. At any moment now her father would lead his people into the pass, unaware of the peril that lay ahead of them. But before Lustra could take a step in the direction of the tunnel, a dark shape slithered down from the rocks above and fell on her back with spine-snapping force.

Meanwhile Jeff Drake had scaled the wall and from a natural cover of lignite rocks was picking off the Morlist scouts as often as one showed his head. "That one makes seven. And Bragen and Woodruff have accounted for most of the others," Drake said aloud. "I think I'll take the chance to run across the ridge."

In the excitement of the skirmish Drake had forgotten his promises to the tunnel guards. But they were keenly alert, and when they saw the flash of ray guns, they sent word to King Regna that the Earthmen had run into trouble.

"Even if it's suicide," the grizzled old warrior muttered as he drew the messenger aside, "we must go on! My people are armed and ready. We shall head for the pass at once."

Drake, moving along the ridge, turned and saw their dark figures making a line through the gloom below. He muttered a prayer that they would escape before Redmond's savage forces overwhelmed them with superior weapons.

He came upon Bragen and Woodruff suddenly. "All clear?" he asked in a whisper.

"All but one of 'em is accounted for," Bragen murmured. "But one is enough to bring Redmond's forces. It's tough we missed him."

"We made a good score," Drake said. "King Regna's people are going through the pass already. Come on. Let's join them. You can find that rope, can't you, Mort?"

"Sure . . . sure!" Woodruff agreed as they moved off through the spreading light of the Saffron Star.

Princess Lustra had begun to move, and the Morlist scout had shifted his grip to his ray pistol's barrel. A flash of the gun would warn the Regnists coming down the pass, but a sharp blow of the gun butt on the girl's head would make her lapse back into unconsciousness until the troop had passed.

Then Jeff Drake, starting down the rope, saw Lustra's danger.

As the Morlist moved toward the girl his heavy boots grated in the gravel, the sound drowning out the hum of leather against the rope above him. Drake saw the ray pistol swing back over the Morlist's shoulder as the ugly creature reached Lustra's side. Drake knew there wasn't a split second to spare. Twenty-five or thirty feet remained to the floor of the pass, but if Jeff Drake clung to the rope, Lustra might suffer a fractured skull—possibly death.

The moment that thought flashed through Drake's brain he kicked hard against the rock wall, releasing his grip on the rope. In the darkness he couldn't tell exactly where he would land. A second later his boots struck the Morlist's head with a sharp thud and almost simultaneously came the sickening snap of the enemy's neck.

While Bragen dragged the Morlist back into the shadows, Drake helped Lustra to her feet. "Wh-what happened?" she asked blearily. "Oh, here comes my father at the head of his people!"

Before Drake could speak, the King drew up before them. "Well, Drake . . . you seem to have been mistaken about this pass. You ran into a Morlist patrol?"

Drake stood crisply at attention beside Princess Lustra. "No danger, Sir! My companions were shooting at shadows. We Earthmen are full of pranks, you know. One of the shots must have dislodged a rock which fell on Lustra."

Lustra choked back a laugh. Her hand, tightening on Jeff Drake's arm, assured him that she would keep the secret.

—END—

RED COMET
HA! HO HO! HO!
MY COSMIC BLASTFIRE BOUNCES OFF ITS SHELL!
CY THATCHER
STOP THAT THING! WE'LL BE EATEN ALIVE!
SUDDEN DEATH... MYSTERIOUS, GHASTLY, AWAITS WEARY VISITORS TO KARNU ON THE PLANET SATURN. BUT THE RED COMET DISCOVERS THIS HIDEOUS PERIL WHEN HIS FRIENDS DOLORES AND RUSTY ARE MARKED FOR DOOM BY A WEIRD AND SINISTER DWARF...!
CHRIS RAINE, FAMOUS INTERPLANETARY EXPLORER FROM EARTH, ARRIVES AT KARNU WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE TO COLLECT PLANT SPECIMENS.
WHY, THIS VILLAGE IS DESERTED, ELVA!... I CAN'T UNDERSTAND.
PERHAPS THE VALE CRAB FISHERMEN HAVE KILLED THE INHABITANTS!
BUT THE LAWS OF SATURN PROHIBIT FISHING FOR VALE CRABS SINCE THEY CAN ONLY BE BAITED WITH HUMAN FLESH... WAIT HERE. I'LL SEE IF ANYONE IS ABOUT!
RAINE FAILS TO SPOT A HIDEOUS SHAPE.
THIS IS HOW MURTON WELCOMES VISITORS TO KARNU. HO-HO!

AAGH! ELVA... RUN QUICKLY!
CAPTURE THAT WOMAN! SHE'S TRYING TO ESCAPE!
BUT ELVA BEATS THEM TO HER SH.P.
CALLING RED COMET... THIS IS ELVA RAINE... THE CRAB HUNTERS ON KARNU ATTACKED MY HUSBAND. MEET ME OUTSIDE THE FIRST RING OF SATURN.
IN FEARFUL HASTE ELVA TAKES OFF.
BUT MURTON HAS LEAPED TO THE CLIFF AND
THAT BOULDER WILL SEAL HER DOOM... NO EARTH BEING EVER ESCAPED FROM KARNU!
THE BOULDER TEARS OFF THE SPACE SH.P.'S TAIL, SMASHING THE ROCKET TUBES!
THE RUDDER IS BROKEN... I'M GOING TO CRASH INTO THE CLIFF!

WITH THE SHRILL SCREECH OF TEARING METAL, ELVA'S SHIP IS HOPELESSLY WRECKED.
MEANWHILE RED COMET, RUSTY AND DOLORES STREAK FROM EARTH IN ANSWER TO ELVA'S MESSAGE....
IT'S AGAINST THE LAW TO HUNT THOSE CREATURES, ISN'T IT, RED COMET?
THAT'S RIGHT, RUSTY, BUT THE VALE CRABS ON SATURN ARE VONSTROLS. A FINE GRADE OF IS EXTRACTED FROM THEM AND SMUGGLED TO MARS. WE'LL HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR THESE CRABS.'
YEAH. IF THEY'RE MAN-EATERS LIKE YOU SAY, RED.'
LATER.. RED COMET'S CRAFT CIRCLES THE CLIFF WHERE ELVA CRASHED...
HOLY SMOKE, DOLORES,' THAT WRECK LOOKS LIKE THE RAINES' SHIP.'
LANDING ON THE TREACHEROUS SPOT...
STAY IN THE SHIP. I'M GOING TO SEARCH THE WRECK FOR ELVA'S BODY. STRANGE THAT SHE SHOULD HAVE CRACKED UP.'
YES... DON'T TAKE ANY RISKS!'
BLOOD SPLATTERED ALL OVER, BUT NO SIGN OF A BODY. THE CRAB HUNTERS MUST HAVE TAKEN THE CORPSE! I'LL MAKE THEM PAY FOR THEIR MURDERS.'
MEANWHILE RUSTY IS DEMONSTRATING RED COMET'S NEWEST INSTRUMENT.
WITH THIS NEW TYPE COMPASS, RED CAN EXPLORE PLANETS WHERE THE MAGNETIC POLES OFFER NO ATTRACTION TO AN ORDINARY COMPASS.
OUTSIDE...
AHA,' I CAN USE THAT COMPASS WHEN WE TAKE OUR NEXT LOAD OF CRABOIL TO MARS.' SEE THOSE TWO INSIDE.'
OOOH,' OOOH.'

HIDE HERE AND CAPTURE THIS SHIP'S PILOT, VOVAK.. I WILL BE WAITING IN MY HIDEOUT!
UNAWARE OF THE DREADFUL PERIL THAT HAS OVERTAKEN HIS FRIENDS, RED COMET RETURNS TO HIS CRAFT.
AND JUST AS HE ENTERS...
GET YOUR SLIMY PAWS OFF ME, YOU FISH-EYED DE\..!
BUT THE BEAST DRAGS RED COMET DOWN...
MEANWHILE IN HIS HIDEOUT, THE SINISTER DWARF HAS STRAPPED DOLORES TO A BAIT CUTTER.
SHOW ME HOW THAT COMPASS WORKS OR YOU'LL SEE TH.S GIRL CHOPPED TO CRAB BAIT BEFORE YOUR EYES!
NO, DON.T! I'LL FIX THE COMPASS FOR YO..!
N A FEW M NUTES.
SEE, THAT'S HOW IT WORKS. BUT UNLESS YOU RELEASE DOLORES...
HEH,! HEH,!
AT THE SAME T.ME RED COMET IS BEING ..ED TOWARD MURTON'S HIDEOUT...
OUTSIDE... RED COMET SUR-PRISES HIS CAPTOR...
COUNT THREE BEFORE PULLING YOUR RIP CORD.. AND TH-ANKS FOR BRING-ING ME TO YOUR HANGOUT.!

THE DOOMED SLAVE'S SHRIEK ATTRACTS MURTON...
I'LL GET HIM WITH THIS GAFF HOOK.
SNEAKING INTO MY HIDEOUT, EH? THIS WILL CURE YOUR CURIOSITY.
DON'T TRY THAT AGAIN, YOU MISSHAPEN HOODLUM!
DOLORES! RUSTY... WHAT WERE THESE FIENDISH CRAB HUNTERS UP TO?
RELEASE ME, YOU FOOL OR MY HELPER WILL SLICE THAT WOMAN'S BODY IN HALF.
SURE I'LL LET YOU GO..
..THIS WAY.!
NICE GOING, RED!
GET ME OUT OF THIS DREADFUL DEVICE, RED COMET... HURRY!
HAVE YOU FOUND ANY TRACE OF RAINE AND H.S W.FE, DOLORES.!
YES... THEIR SUITS ARE HERE, BUT ...OH, WATCH OUT! HE'S PULLING THAT ROPE.!
SUDDENLY...
GRAB THE SIDES.! WE'RE FALLING INTO THAT HOLE.!

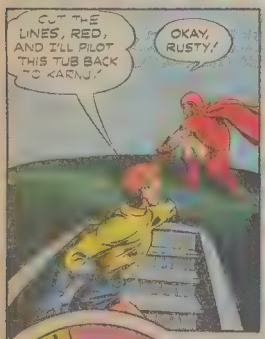
THEY LAND IN A GHASTLY PIT..
CHR.S RAINE'S WATCH AND HIS WIFE'S BRACELET. THE CRABS FED ON THEM. GET UP, QUICK, DOLORES OR WE'LL BE NEXT ON THE MENU.'
I CAN'T MOVE.. USE YOUR COSMIC BLAST PISTOL ON THAT CREATURE!
I'LL TRY IT, BUT I'M AFRAID IT WON'T STOP HIM.'
CRAWL AWAY, DOLORES.' I'LL SHOVE MY GUN INTO HIS JAWS.'
THERE.' THAT SPOILS HIS APPETITE FOR US.'
WE CAN GET OUT BY THAT LADDER.' HOW'S YOUR LEG?
IT'S BEGINNING TO FEEL BETTER!
MEANWHILE...
IF THAT COMPASS FAILS TO GUIDE US TO THE DISTANT CRAB FIELDS, WE'LL USE YOU FOR BAIT, TOO.'
BUT RED COMET AND DOLORES HAVE SEEN RUSTY'S PERI...
I EMPTIED MY PISTOL AT THAT CRAB, THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP THIS SHIP. BUT WE CAN HIDE HERE.'
WITH ROCKET TUBES THUNDERING, THE VICIOUS DWARF ZOOMS HIS ILLEGAL FISHING CRAFT OVER THE DESOLATE VILLAGE....
AN HOUR PASSES
HE'S SLOWING DOWN. I'LL WAIT TILL HE CASTS OFF HIS CRAB HOOKS.
I WISH I KNEW IF RUSTY IS STILL ALIVE. THAT DWARF MAY USE THE BOY FOR BA~!

MOORING HIS CRAFT, MURTON CASTS HIS CRAB LINES IN VIOLATION OF SATURN'S LAWS.....
I COULD NOT TRAVEL THIS FAR SOUTH WITHOUT THAT COMPASS. AH,' THE CRABS ARE PLENTIFUL HERE'
A VALE CRAB LUNGES FOR THE GRISLY BAIT AND IS CAUGHT BY THE HOOK
AS MURTON AND H.S ASSISTANT HAUL UP THEIR CATCH...
THEY WON'T KNOW THIS GUN IS EMPTY UNLESS THEY PUT UP A FIGHT.'
BUT MURTON RUSHES RED COMET AND...
WOVAK,' HIT HIM WITH THE HOOK, QUICK!'
I'LL HAVE TO ROLL OVERBOARD TO DUCK THAT HOOK ...AND TAKE MY CHANCES WITH THE VALE CRABS BELOW.'
DOLORES SPIES RED COMET'S PREDICAMENT AND...
OVER YOU GO BIG BOY'
THERE GOES YOUR FRIEND AND YOU'RE NEXT'
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK.'

ADIOS, YOU VICIOUS LITTLE FIEND! I HOPE YOU DON'T GIVE THAT CRAB INDIGESTION!
AIEEE!

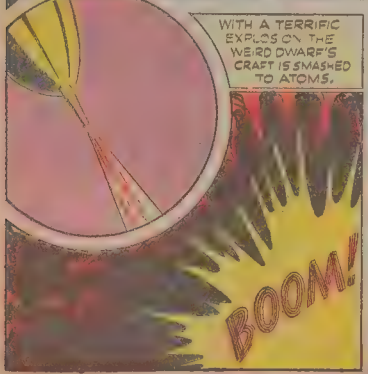
SEEING COMET'S BLUE VORTON, DOLORES FINDS RUSTY BOUND...
HOW'S RED?
HE'S OK

WE NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D ESCAPE THOSE DREADFUL CREATURES!


CUT THE LINES, RED, AND I'LL PILOT THIS TUB BACK TO KARNU!
OKAY, RUSTY!

WITH RUSTY AT THE CONTROLS, THEY ZOOM AWAY FROM THE CRAB TERRITORY...

WITHIN AN HOUR THEY ARE ONCE AGAIN IN RED COMET'S SPACE CRUISER...!
ONE SHOT FROM MY DISINTEGRATOR CANNON WILL BLAST THAT CRABBING CRAFT TO BITS!


WITH A TERRIFIC EXPLOSION THE WEIRD DWARF'S CRAFT IS SMASHED TO ATOMS.
BOOM!

THAT'S THE LAST WE'LL HEAR FROM VALE CRAB HUNTERS ON SATURN. WE'VE AVENGED THE FATE OF CHRIS RAINE AND ELVA. NOW BACK TO EARTH, BUT WHEN CRAB MEAT IS ON THE MENU, I THINK I'LL PASS IT UP!
THE END

THE MOON'S SURFACE IS COVERED WITH HUGE MOUNTAIN RANGES, EXTINCT VOLCANIC CRATERS, DEEP VALLEYS, AND VAST BARREN SEAS OF SAND! OVER IT IN A SKY BLAZING WITH CELESTIAL BODIES, OUR EARTH HANGS LIKE A HUGE BALL, REVEALING THE CONTINENTS AND OCEANS WITH WHICH WE ARE ALL SO FAMILIAR. AFTER ALL IT IS ONLY 238 857 MILES AWAY! AS FAR AS EARTH'S SCIENTISTS HAVE DETERMINED, THE MOON IS AT PRESENT A COLD, AIRLESS, AND WATERLESS BODY.

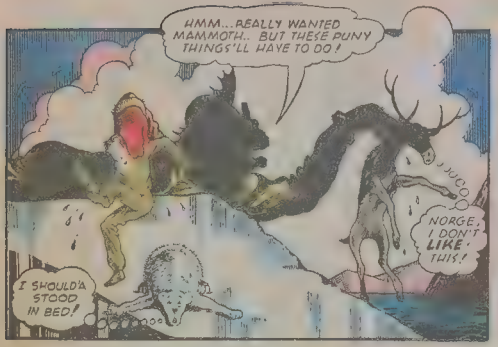
TO SURVIVE THE CHANGING OF OUR SATELLITE CONDITIONS, THE MOONMAN PASSED THROUGH A LONG PERIOD OF EVOLUTION. HIS SKIN IS A TOUGH RUBBERY HIDE WHICH ENABLES HIM TO WITHSTAND THE TERRIFIC COLD. HE HAS ONLY VESTIGIAL NOSTRILS AND EARS AS THESE MEMBERS HAVE LONG SINCE LOST THEIR POWER TO FUNCTION. LOOK AT HIS TOOTHLESS MOUTH WHICH HE USES TO SUCK IN THE DRY MINERAL DUST ON WHICH HE LIVES... WILL THE EARTH-MAN EVER SEE HIM BEFORE HE BECOMES EXTINCT?

NORGE BENSON
JUST TO SCRAPE UP BREAKFAST, A SIMPLE LITTLE MAMMOTH STEAK FOR FROSTING. OUR TRIO FALLS INTO A POTHOLE OF THE DIZZIEST STEW SINCE THE YEAR ONE..
IT'S SPRING ON PLUTO, THE PLANET OF ICE AND SNOW.. THE FIRST SPRING IN 2,717,436½ YEARS!, FURTHERMORE IT IS ALSO NEAR MORNING AT THE END OF A SIX MONTH NIGHT....
ZZZ

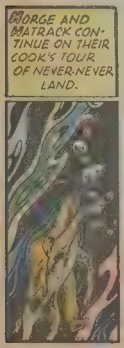
IN THEIR COSY LITTLE IGLOO, NORGE, HATRACK, AND FROSTING ARE BUSY DREAMING NEVER DREAMING IT AT SPRING IS HERE!
ZZZZ
ZZZZZZ
ZZZZ
JUST THEN THE PLUTONIAN MOON MEETS THE PLUTONIAN SUN AND
C TRIO IS DISPOSSESSED.. THEIR HOUSE S MPLY MELTS UP TO THEIR EARS!
WELL? WHAT HAPPENED?
OUCH!
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I AIN'T INFORMATION PLEASE!
IT SEEMS TO ME IT'S A THAW.. IN FACT, PLUTO'S MELTING. IT SEEMS TO..
IT SEEMS, HE SAYS!
HATRACK, GET THAT BEAR-RUG OFF YOUR HORNS! TELL IT TO QUIT STARIN' AT ME!
SPLOP SPLOP SPLASH
HEY, FELLERS! C'MON UP!
N-A YOU COME DOWN WATER'S FINE!
SUDDENLY, THE WATER SUBSIDES.
WHEW! NOW WHADDYA TWINK O' THAT?
BR-RR C-C-COLD.
AI L I KIN TWINK OF IS ME, IN' STOMACH.. AN' THAT RUG THAT'S STARIN' ME BLUE IN THE FACE!
FROSTING! HOW CAN YOU TWINK OF FOOD AT A TIME LIKE THIS? OH WELL. I ALWAYS SAID NO SENSE, ALL STOMACH!
COME ON, HATRACK! WE MIGHT AS WELL EAT.. NOTHING ELSE TO DO. SO WE'LL TRY TO FIND OUR KAYAKS AN' GO HUNTIN'
UM. YUMM! NICE SEALY HAM WITH DODO EGGS!.. OR MAYBE A MAMMOTH STEAK!

GO BACK, PLEASE 2,717,436 ½ YEARS. PLUTO'S WEATHERMAN IS ATTENDING TO BUSINESS.
HMM WHAT'LL I MAKE THE WEATHER TODAY?? FAIR! SO'S I KIN GO MAMMOTH HUNTING!
ICE FROM SLEET SNOW HAIL RAIN
WOMAN! WHERE'S BREAKFAST?
COMING, DARLING!
I'M BRINGING YOUR HOT BRICK BISCUITS NOW...WITH MINCED CLODHOPPER SAUCE.
IT'S MY OWN RECIPE!
YEAH? I HOPE IT'S BETTER THAN YOUR SAP-APPLE DUMPLINGS!
GOTTA EAT QUICK SO'S I KIN GO MAMMOTH HUN
MR. WEATHERMAN GRABS THE FIRST THING HE SEES...
ULP!
GLACIER RELEASE FOR EMERGENCY ONLY
WHICH IS THE GLACIER RELEASE FOR EMERGENCY ONLY!
ALWAYS SAID WE SHOULDA ELECTED A NEW WEATHER-MAN!
SCRAM, PEOPLE!
BUT ALAS . THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THAT PLUTO FROZE SOLID AS AN ICE CUBE.
THAT WAS 2,717,436 ½ YEARS AGO...AND NOW, AT THIS VERY MINUTE, THOSE FRESH-FROZEN PLUTONIANS ARE THAWING OUT!

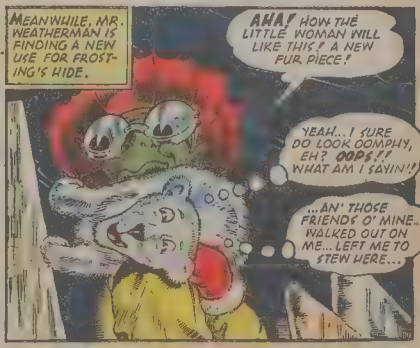
NOW. BACK TO THE PRESENT. THE TRIO KAYAKS DOWN THE RIVER JINX TO THE NEVER-NEVER LAND OF MAMMOTH MAM MOTHS...
SLOW DEERS AHEAD
HOW'LL I EVER GET A MAMMOTH STEAK THIS WAY?
I KIN FLY BETTER THAN I KIN WORK THIS TUB!
HANG ON TO MY KAYAK, FROSTING!
HEY! BUT WHERE'S HATRACK GONE AN' WENT TO?
HUH? HATRACK? HATRACK!!
THIS IS WHERE I SAW HIM LAST... GOTTA DIVE FOR HIM...
WHEW! AN' I'LL REST ON THIS LOG...ALL WORE OUT I AM!
BUT WHAT APPEARS TO BE A LOG IS HATRACK'S KAYAK...UPSIDE DOWN!
AWK! LISSEN, YOU! THIS AIN'T NO TIME FER HIDE AN' SEEK! NOW NORGE'S LOST!
UGGLE! SPLUG... OHHH NOE!!
ALONG COMES A THAWED OUT MAM - MOTH WHO CAN'T FIGURE THIS OUT.
I'LL FIND NORGE!
SUDDENLY, NORGE POPS ABOVE WATER
HATRACK!! NOW WHERE'S FROSTING?
WENT LOOKIN' FER YOU!
LOOK BEHIND YOU, NORGE!
COULDA SWORE I SAW BENSON HERE...
FINALLY, THEY GET TOGETHER... JUST WHEN MR. WEATHERMAN THAWS OUT AND DECIDES HE WANTS BREAKFAST...
BEAR STEAK!
HEY! LEGGO UV HIM!


HMM...REALLY WANTED MAMMOTH.. BUT THESE PUNY THINGS'LL HAVE TO DO!
NORGE, I DON'T LIKE THIS!
I SHOULD'A STOOD IN BED!

BUT..SINCE THE ORIGIN OF MR. WEATHERMAN'S SPECIES, NOTHING LIKE NORGE AND HATRACK HAD BEEN SEEN... SO...
DUNNO 'BOUT YOU.. I'LL KEEP TH' B'AR


NORGE AND HATRACK CONTINUE ON THEIR COOK'S TOUR OF NEVER-NEVER LAND.

FROSTING'S DESERTED US...NEVER THOUGHT HE'D DO IT...
ABSOLUTELY! HE DIDN'T MAKE A SINGLE ATTEMPT TO THROW HIMSELF IN THE RIVER WITH US!


MEANWHILE, MR. WEATHERMAN IS FINDING A NEW USE FOR FROSTING'S HIDE.
AHA! HOW THE LITTLE WOMAN WILL LIKE THIS! A NEW FUR PIECE!
YEAH...I SURE DO LOOK COMPHY, EH? OOPS!! WHAT AM I SAYIN'!
...AN' THOSE FRIENDS O' MINE... WALKED OUT ON ME...LEFT ME TO STEW HERE...

HEY, POLKS! LOOKA ME! I SEE WHAT I FISHED OUTTA THE JINX!

I'M GONNA USE HIM FER A NECKPIECE, OR MAYBE A RUG, OR, SOMEPIN'!

SALAAM! IT'S A B'AR!
ONLY ONE IN CAPTIVITY!
CAN'T CUT A RUG OUTTA HIM!
NO, SIR! HE'S SACRED!

NORGE AND HATRACK AREN'T HAVING MUCH SUCCESS ON THEIR TRIP...
NO MAMMOTHS AROUND HERE...
THEN WHAT NEXT?
OOOH!' I-I-I G-G-GALLOPED OVER AN ICE CLIFF!
ARE YOU TELLING ME?
DOWN, DOWN THEY GO... TO A PERFECT LANDING ON A MAMMOTH MAMMOTH'S BACK!
IT'S A WHOLE HERD!
WHOOPS! WE LANDED ON THE HERD BOSS! AN' MADE HIM SORE WE'RE STAMPEDIN'!
MEANWHILE FROSTINGS HOSTS HAVE HIM POSING FOR A STATUE
NOIVE OF 'EM! MAKIN' A MONKEY OUTTA ME!
WHEN ALONG COMES NORGE, ON HATRACK, ON THE MAMMOTH... WITH A LOT OF OTHER MAMMOTHS.
OOOF!
IT'S A FREE FOR ALL!
BUT HATRACK! HE'S CAUGHT IN THE WEATHER MACHINE... ON THE FREEZE LEVER...
GET ME LOOSE!
THIS IS WHERE I CAME IN!
WELL, IT'S ALL OVER, FOLKS! HATRACK FROZE PLUTO AGAIN. AND FROSTING HAS A HUNK O' MAMMOTH STEAK!
B-BUT, I-I LOST M-MY APPETITE! OH WOE...
SO ENDETH THIS YARN... BUT ANOTHER TALL TALE TAILS THIS IN NEXT PLANET COMICS!

PLANET COMICS GOES ON SALE THE 10th

Star Pirate

BY LEONARDO V.N.C.
"PEARL OF NEPTUNE"... MEN ON A SCORE OF PLANETS HAVE FOUGHT AND DIED TO POSSESS IT. NOW STAR PIRATE LOCKS SWORDS WITH THE RUTHLESS GHOST GANGSTER OF SPACE IN AN ALL OUT BATTLE FOR THE FATEFUL JEWEL!
INSIDE THEIR SPACE SHIP, THE "VENGEANCE", STAR PIRATE AND TRODY WATCH AS THE RECEIVER FLASHES AN S.O.S. CALL FROM ONE OF THE PIRATE'S LIEUTENANTS.
IT'S THE GHOST GANGSTER OF SPACE HE'S BOMBING THE FORT... AFTER THE JEWEL ...WE CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER...
THEY GOT HIM! HEAD BACK TO THE FORT, TRODY!
RIGHT, SIR!

THE BLACK "VENGEANCE" HURTLES THROUGH THE SPACE LANES AT 2,000 MILES AN HOUR
IF I KNOW THE WAY THAT THE GHOST WORKS, WE WON'T BE THERE WHEN WE ARRIVE!
NOT IF HE WANTS TO KEEP HIS BONY NECK ON HIS SHOULDERS HE WON'T!
THE STAR PIRATE REACHES THE FORT TOO LATE
THE PEARL'S GONE, PIRATE! HOW ABOUT THE LIEUTENANT? DID THEY?
THE BLOODY MURDERERS! THEY GOT HIM IN THE BACK - BUT I KNOW A WAY TO MAKE THEM PAY!
THEY'LL HAVE TO TURN THE PEARL OVER TO A JEWEL FENCE! AND THAT FENCE WILL BE MOG, THE SLICKEST RASCAL ON NEPTUNE. OWNS A JOINT WHERE EVERY THIEF IN SPACE HANGS OUT. SUPPOSE WE DROP IN FOR TEA?
LATER IN THE DEN OF MOG, THE JEWEL FENCE
COSY PLACE! EVERY BIG-TIME RAT BETWEEN HERE AND THE POLAR STAR!
I'VE SEEN BETTER RAT HOLES IN AN EARTH SEWER.
SORRY, LADS, BUT...
CUT IT SHORT, MOG. YOU KNOW US, AND YOU KNOW WHAT WE WANT!
ALL ABOUT YOUR PAL, THE GHOST, AND MY PEARL.
WITH A SUDDEN JERK, STAR PIRATE YANKS MOG OVER THE COUNTER.
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A LITTLE HEART TO HEART TALK -
SUDDENLY MOG'S POWERFUL LEGS CRASH WITH A SICKENING THUD INTO PIRATE'S MIDRIFF.
WHY, YOU.. UGH!

BUT THE FENCE WHITENS WITH FEAR WHEN STAR PIRATE LIFTS HIM BODILY AND
I'M TIRED OF COAXING, YOU BUG-EYED FROG! TALK!
AND MOG TALKS
MERCY! STAR PIRATE IS FAMED TO THE LAST GREEN STAR FOR MERCY AND EH...AH...UNDERSTANDING, MY PATRONS WOULD TEAR ME APART IF THEY HEARD ME TELL THEIR SECRETS. BUT...EH.. AH...TONIGHT I'LL BE ALONE, IF...
EARTH FOOLS!
GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE IT AT THAT. BUT I DON'T LIKE IT, TRODY, I DON'T LIKE IT!
THAT NIGHT MOG'S GNARLED FIGURE MAKES ITS WAY DOWN THE UNSAVORY "ALLEY OF KNAVES!"
HERE IT IS! THE GHOST AND HIS MOLL WILL HAVE TO HELP ME, FOR I HAVE THE PEARL!
INSIDE THE GHOST'S HIDEOUT.
ALL I'M SAYING, I CAN'T FIGHT THE STAR PIRATE ALONE. WIPE HIM OUT, OR I CHANGE SIDES. I'VE GOT TO LOOK OUT FOR MY EH... AH... HEALTH!
YOU'RE FLIRTING WITH DEATH, NOW, MISTER!
SUDDENLY, THE GHOST MAKES A VICIOUS LUNGE AT THE SMIRKING FENCE.
I'LL TWIST YOUR MANGY NECK OFF BEFORE YOU CAN GIVE HIM THE PEARL!
UGH!

BUT CURION, THE GHOST'S MOLL, LEAPS BETWEEN THE THIEVES, AND
IDIOTS!
YOU'RE WASTING GOOD GOLDO DOLLARS! THE SPACE PATROL WILL PAY A HUGE REWARD FOR STAR PIRATE IF HE'S ALIVE!
BUT YOU FORGET, MY DEAR, THAT I'M WANTED TOO.
AND, AHEM, AND THEY HAVEN'T ANYTHING ON ME YET. I'LL TURN STAR PIRATE OVER TO THE SPACE PATROL. LISTEN, TONIGHT...
THAT NIGHT
COME ON, TRODY, WE'VE WAITED LONG ENOUGH FOR THAT WHISKERED RAT! CRACK THAT SAFE!
LET ME AT IT!
TRODY BLASTS AT THE SAFE WITH HIS RAY TORCH FOR SEVERAL SECONDS, AND THEN..
OKAY, PIRATE, THE SAFE'S WIDE OPEN, BUT IT'S EMPTY!
THEN A LIGHT SNAPS ON
THE GHOST!
RIGHT, PIRATE! AND YOU'RE RIGHT WHERE WE HOPED YOU'D BE!
BUT TRODY LEAPS FORWARD, AND..
SMMASHES A TERRIFIC LEFT INTO THE FENCE'S CHIN.
QUICK, GHOST, THE GUN!
AS THE GHOST WHIRLS, HIS GUN COUGHS FLAME AT TRODY'S HEAD..
IF HIS AIM'S AS BAD AS HIS DISPOSITION, I'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH!

SUDDENLY, CORION SEIZES A BOTTLE, AND
HE'S OUT OF THE GAME!
TIE HIM UP! WE'LL CARRY HIM OVER TO A SPACE SHIP. FROM THEN ON HE'S YOUR BOTHER!
NO BOTHER AT ALL-HE'LL COME ALONG LIKE A LAMB... WITH A DAGGER AT HIS BACK!
A FEW MINUTES LATER. THEY LIFT STAR PIRATE INTO THE SPACE SHIP
AND
BEFORE I GET OFF THE SHIP! NO TRICKS WITH THE REWARD - I'LL BE WAITING AT THE DEN FOR IT!
I'LL BE BACK!
AS THE GHOST LEAVES..
NEVER TRUST A GIRL TO TIE A KNOT! IT'S A MISTAKE!
AND NOW, YOU YOUNG WILD-CAT!
YOU! LOOSE!
WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, CORION HURLS HER DAGGER
IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR YOU TO SIT VERY STILL IN A CORNER SOMEWHERE! WHOOF!
YOU BEAST!
THE ANCIENT EARTHMEN CALLED THIS A FLYING TACKLE!

WHEW! BY THE COCKEYED CRAZY COMETS! I'D RATHER TACKLE A JUPITERIAN OCTOPUS! WELL
WE'RE HEADING BACK FOR NOG'S DEN - AND WHEN I GET THERE I'LL MAKE YOUR FRIEND, THE GHOST, WISH HE'D GIVEN HIMSELF UP TO THE SPACE PATROL TEN YEARS AGO!
STAR PIRATE STRIDES TOWARD NOG'S DEN, CARRYING CORION IN HIS ARMS
AS HE ENTERS, PIRATE FINDS TRODY TRYING TO REVIVE THE JEWEL FENCE.
HEY, TRODY! STOP DROWNING MY STAR WITNESS!
STAR PIRATE!
I'LL LET YOU IN ON THE WHY AND WHERE - FACES OF THE ESCAPE, TRODY. NOW I'M GOING TO...
TWIST THIS DEVIL'S BEARD TILL HE SINGS LIKE AN ANGEL
WOW! THE "PEARL OF NEPTUNE!" IN NOG'S BEARD!
MERCY! I...ER...AH... AM A SIMPLE MAN, WISHING NO MAN HARM. AN INNOCENT VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE. YOU HAVE THE PEARL... LET ME GO!
YOU'RE NO GOOD TO US - GO AS FAR AS YOU LIKE, NOG!

IDIOTS! THEY'LL BE RIPE FOR THE GHOST WHEN HE COMES! THE PEARL WILL BE MINE AGAIN!
GOOD-BY NOW!
LET ME CALL HIM BACK, THE SLIMY SNAKE! HE'S SLITHERIN' STRAIGHT FOR THE GHOST'S HANGOUT. I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES!
NO, TRODY.
WE'LL MEET THE GHOST ON HIS OWN STAMPING GROUNDS, AND MOG'S THE MAN WHO'LL BRING HIM HERE. RIGHT?
SOUNDS LIKE SUICIDE TO ME, BUT YOU'RE BOSS, PIRATE.
THE TWO FRIENDS SAUNTER INTO THE BAR-ROOM
HOW ABOUT A GLASS OF WINE WHILE WE WAIT, PAL?
WE WON'T BE WAITING LONG!
HERE'S A TOAST TO THE "PEARL OF NEPTUNE" AND THE...
SUDDENLY, THE GHOST BURSTS INTO THE ROOM!
COME ON, MEN! THEY'RE ALONE! GET THEM!
LOOKS LIKE THE GUESTS HAVE ARRIVED, TRODY!
GOOD EVENING, GENTLE-MEN. I WAS JUST PROPOSING A TOAST!
A TOAST TO THE "PEARL OF NEPTUNE"... NO, DON'T SNATCH! ... AND A TOAST TO A GOOD MANY GALLANT MEN WHO HAVE DIED TO PROTECT IT!

MEN WHO HAVE DIED TO PROTECT IT FROM MURDERER, TYRANTS, AND CUT-THROATS LIKE YOU! IT'S CAUSED SUFFERING AND DEATH ON A SCORE OF PLANETS FOR NEARLY A THOUSAND YEARS, SO...
A FAREWELL TOAST! THE PEARL OF NEPTUNE WILL DISSOLVE IN WINE!
"I'LL DIE FOR THAT, STAR PIRATE!
THE BATTLE RAGES.
AND
WELL, TRODY, GUESS THE PARTY'S OVER WE CAN RELAX AND FORGET OUR TROUBLES FOR AWHILE.
YOUR TROUBLES ARE JUST BEGINNING. LOOK!
BY THE SEVEN RINGS OF SATURN. WHAT DO I DO WITH HER?
IT'S YOUR PROBLEM, STRONG MAN, AND YOU HAVE TO WORK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF!
CAD! I'LL TEAR YOUR EYES OUT FOR THIS!
STAR PIRATE OUTWITS JUPITER'S SPACE-WOLF AND HIS SHANGHAI GANG IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF PLANET COMICS!

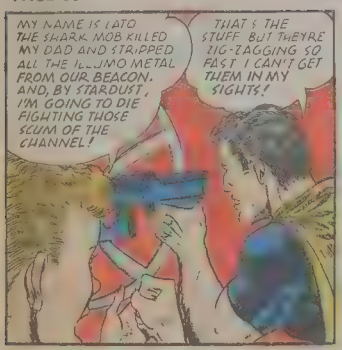
FLINT BAKER

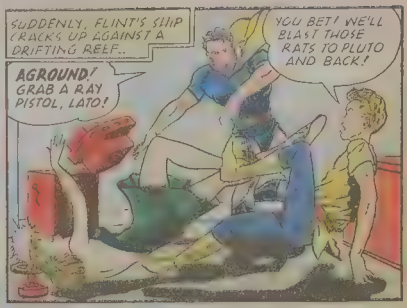
BY Al Schmidt

LATE ONE FOGGY NIGHT THE BEACON KEEPER AT THE MOUTH OF THE SPACE CHANNEL TO UKON ANSWERS A KNOCK AT HIS TOWER DOOR.
LET GO OF ME, YOU CHANNEL SHARK! LATO! THE SHARKS! SHOOT TO KILL!
THOSE ARE YOUR LAST WORDS, RODJER!
THE CHANNEL SHARK MOB RUSHES TO AID ITS CHIEFTAIN.
AH! THAT SHOT SMASHES THE BEACON LIGHT. THEY CAN'T SIGNAL FOR HELP NOW!

LATO ANSWERS HIS FATHER'S SCREAMS...
GRAB HIS PISTOL, DAD! HE'S TRYING TO KILL ME!
YOUR OLD MAN IS DEAD, WE'LL TOSS YOU OFF THE REEF WITH HIM, KID!
MEANWHILE, FLINT BAKER AND MIMI ARE BIDDING A HASTY FAREWELL TO CAPTAIN ZYLM, UKON'S POLICE DIRECTOR...
I'LL KEEP MY PROMISE TO YOUR PEOPLE.
UKON FACES UTTER RUIN IF ITS CHANNELS ARE CLOSED TO SPACE TRAFFIC.
WITH A SQUADRON OF ARMORED CRUISERS FROM EARTH I CAN WIPE OUT THE SHARKS!
FLINT BAKER'S SWIFT CRAFT, THE ROGUE STAR, ROCKETS TOWARD THE PERILOUS CHANNEL.
A THOUSAND MILES THROUGH THE CHANNEL AND NO TROUBLE SO FAR.
KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED, MIMI SAY! WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT BEACON AHEAD?
FLINT IS SHOCKED BY THE SCENE AS HE FOCUSES HIS RADIOSCOPE ON THE BEACON.
WE'LL GET FIFTY POUNDS OF ILLUMO FROM THIS LIGHT. YEAH, THROW THE KID OFF THE REEF NOW!
IF I'M CAUGHT BY AN AIR CURRENT, I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU SOME DAY!

DIDN'T REACH THE CURRENT. FRICTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE WILL BURN ME TO DUST BEFORE I COME TO THE NEXT CHANNEL!
DROP THE LIFE NET, MIMI IF WE ACT FAST WE CAN SAVE THAT KID'S LIFE!
LOADING THE PRECIOUS ILLUMO METAL ABOARD HIS SHIP, THE SHARK MOB'S CHIEF ROCKETS TOWARD FLINT BAKER'S CRAFT...
WHEW...YOU CAUGHT ME SO SUDDENLY... ER, THANKS!
TAKE MY HANDS, HURRY, BEFORE THE OTHER SHIP ZOOMS AFTER US!
LOOK! THAT SHIP PICKED UP THE KID - COULD IT BE FLINT BAKER?
SURE, IT'S FLINT BAKER, AND THE BOSS TOLD ME TO LEAVE NO TRACE OF HIM. A DIRECT HIT WITH THIS NEW RAY CANNON WILL SMASH HIS SHIP TO SPLINTERS!
IF BAKER ESCAPES WITH THAT KID, OUR RACKET WILL BE TOUGH. YOU SHOULD HAVE CUT THAT BRAT'S THROAT, CHIEF!
HIT...BY THE GANG SHIP'S RAY CANNON CONTROLS ARE SMASHED!
STAND BY YOUR GUNS, FLINT. I'LL PULL THE SPACE BRAKE!

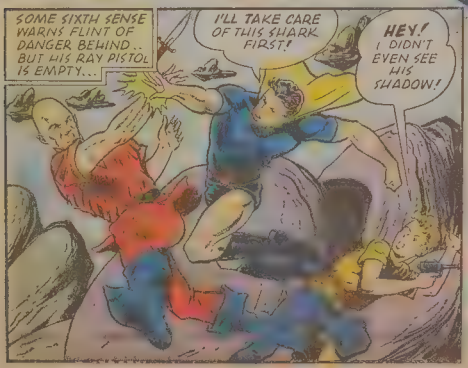

MY NAME IS LATO THE SHARK MOB KILLED MY DAD AND STRIPPED ALL THE ILLUMO METAL FROM OUR BEACON. AND, BY STARDUST, I'M GOING TO DIE FIGHTING THOSE SCUM OF THE CHANNEL!
THAT'S THE STUFF. BUT THEY'RE ZIG-ZAGGING SO FAST I CAN'T GET THEM IN MY SIGHTS!


SUDDENLY, FLINT'S SHIP CRACKS UP AGAINST A DRIFTING REEF..
AGROUND! GRAB A RAY PISTOL, LATO!
YOU BET! WE'LL BLAST THOSE RATS TO PLUTO AND BACK!

FIRE A STEADY STREAM, LATO. WE'RE OUTNUMBERED!
SMASH THAT EARTHMAN TO ATOMS. I'LL PICK OFF THE KID.

GOT THAT ONE! COVER THE LEFT SIDE, THEY'LL TRY TO SURROUND US.

LOOK! TWO OF 'EM ARE DRAGGING THE GIRL FROM YOUR SHIP!


SOME SIXTH SENSE WARNS FLINT OF DANGER BEHIND.. BUT HIS RAY PISTOL IS EMPTY...
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS SHARK FIRST!
HEY! I DIDN'T EVEN SEE HIS SHADOW!

THIS WILL BLOW OFF YOUR HEAD, EARTHMAN!
I'LL BLOW HIM DOWN BEFORE HE CAN CARRY OUT THAT THREAT!

SUDDENLY, FLINT AND LATO ARE CAUGHT COMPLETELY OFF GUARD
LET'S TAKE 'EM ALIVE, JURRO!
OKAY, CHIEF... BUT I THOUGHT YOU GOT ORDERS TO KILL FLINT BAKER...
WE'VE GOT SOMETHING WORSE THAN DEATH FOR YOU, EARTHMAN. YOU'LL SWEAT YOUR FLESH OFF WORKING IN ILLUMO FURNACES. YOUR WOMAN IS OUR CAPTIVE, TOO!
STEEL CABLES... I CAN'T BREAK LOOSE THERE! NO HOPE FOR MIMI!
MEN! THE CABLE BROKE! BAKER IS LOOSE! BLAST HIM DOWN!
I'LL TAKE YOUR GUN, UGLY-PUSS. YOU WON'T BE NEEDING IT ANY MORE!
BUT RAGE POURS NEW STRENGTH INTO FLINT'S MUSCLES...
HUH-HUH! THE CHIEF'S GONNA LET YOU LIVE TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR WOMAN, EH?
IF I COULD GET MY HANDS ON YOUR THROAT!
GREAT MOONS! THIS CABLE IS SLIPPING... ANOTHER HARD TUG AND I'LL BE FREE!
IF I CAN BLAST MY WAY INSIDE, I'LL FORCE THESE THUGS TO LEAD ME TO THEIR HIDEOUT.
FLINT GAINS HIS OBJECTIVE BEFORE THE MOBSTERS CAN RELOAD THEIR PISTOLS.
THAT'S RIGHT... KEEP YOUR HANDS UP WHILE I THROW YOUR WEAPONS OVERBOARD. YOU'RE GOING TO TURN THIS SHIP BACK TO YOUR HIDEOUT, THEN I'LL RADIO THE UKON POLICE!
WE BETTER DO AS HE ORDERS, MEN. MAYBE LATER HE'LL WISH HE'D BEEN SMARTER!

FLINT CAN'T HEAR THE MOBSTERS WHISPER AS THEY COMPLY WITH HIS ORDERS
HE'S PLAYIN' RIGHT INTO OUR HANDS EH CHIEF? THE POLICE? THAT'S A HOT ONE!
YEAH... BUT IT DOESN'T PAY ME TO TAKE ORDERS FROM AN EARTHMAN. I'LL MAKE HIM SWEAT HIS VEINS DRY IN THE FURNACES WHEN WE GET TO THE HIDE-OUT!
TAKE CARE OF MIMI. I'LL CONTACT THE POLICE ON THE PORTABLE RADIO BACK THERE.
YOU BET! I CAN'T FORGET HOW SHE PULLED ME FROM THE LIFE NET. AND THANKS, FLINT, FOR RELEASING ME FROM MY BONDS!
FLINT STIFFENS WHEN HE SWITCHES ON THE TWO WAY RADIO.
CALLING ALL PATROL CRUISERS! CAPTAIN ZYLM KIDNAPPED AT EMERGENCY SPACE PORT BY SHARK MOB. ALL PATROLMEN ORDERED TO SEARCH HILLS FOR GANG'S HIDEOUT!
I CAN'T UNDERSTAND ZYLM - KIDNAPPED? THIS RUINS MY PLAN... BUT THERE'S A SLIM CHANCE I CAN CATCH THE GANG AT THE HIDEOUT OFF GUARD, AND RESCUE ZYLM.
HEAR THAT ON THE RADIO? HUH, HUH! THE BOSS IS A SMART FOX. WE'RE COMING INTO THE HIDEOUT NOW. GET READY TO JUMP THE EARTHMAN
YOU KNOW ME, CHIEF, I'VE GOT A DAGGER INSIDE MY JACKET!
THE EARTHMAN SEES HIS HOPES CRASH AS HE PEERS FROM A PORTHOLE TO THE MOB'S CAMOUFLAGED SPACE PORT
AND WHILE HIS BACK IS TURNED..
LOOK OUT, FLINT!
ONTO YOUR FEET, JURRO. I HAVE HIM COVERED. LEAD THE WAY OUT. I'LL TEND TO THE EARTH-WOMAN... ALONE!

A SHORT WHILE LATER FLINT IS DRAGGED BEFORE THE CHANNEL MOBS BOSS.
FOR YOUR UNWISE INTERFERENCE WITH OUR BUSINESS, EARTHMAN, YOU WILL SHARE THE FATE OF OTHER CAPTIVES WHO HAVE DIED TENDING OUR FURNACES. TAKE HIM AWAY, MEN!
WAIT! I WILL REVEAL A SECRET SOURCE OF PRECIOUS METAL, ILLUMO, IF YOU WILL FREE MIMI AND LATO.
YES...WE'LL RELEASE YOUR FRIENDS WHEN YOU LEAD US TO THAT SECRET SOURCE ILLUMO IS THE RAREST METAL IN THE UNIVERSE.
THE MOMENT THE GUARDS RELAX THEIR GRIP ON FLINT'S ARMS...
THIS SACK OF STOLEN ILLUMO FILAMENTS IS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED FOR YOU, BIG SHOT!
FLINT BEATS THE CHIEF TO THE DRAW...AND MIMI IS SAFE.
SORRY... BUT YOU ASKED FOR IT!
I NEED YOUR GAT TO DEAL WITH THE WOODLUM WHO'S HOLDING THE EARTHWOMAN.
I KNEW I COULD DEPEND ON YOU, LATO, TO HELP MIMI ABOARD.
KEEP 'EM COVERED, FLINT. I'LL HANDLE THE CONTROLS.
THE MOB OFFERS NO RESISTANCE AS FLINT ESCAPES WITH THEIR LEADER.
LET THE FOOL TAKE OUR BOSS. I'M FED UP WITH THIS RACKET. LET'S CASH IN ON THE ILLUMO AND SPLIT THE FORTUNE BETWEEN US.
RIGHT! LET'S GO!
I'M GOING TO BLAST THEIR ILLUMO FURNACES WITH THIS RAY CANNON. TURN THE NOSE DOWN LATO!
IT'S A PLEASURE!

AS THE ROCKETS EXPLODE, THE WALLS OF THE GULCH TUMBLE DOWN ON THE CHANNEL SHARKS.
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

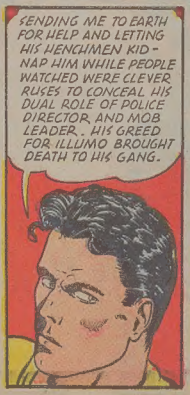
THAT'S THE END OF THOSE CUTTHROATS, MIMI.
YES, FLINT. BUT YOU SAID THEY HELD CAPTAIN ZYLM PRISONER. HE MUST HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THAT HOLOCAUST. YOU SHOULD HAVE SAVED HIM!

BEHIND THEIR BACKS...
I HOPE THAT CRACKED YOUR SKULL! YOUR MOB KILLED MY FATHER!

A SHORT WHILE LATER AT THE UKON CENTRAL SPACE PORT.
THERE'S A CROWD OF PEOPLE LOOKING UP SUSPICIOUSLY AT THIS SHIP. HOPE THEY'LL BELIEVE MY STORY.
WISH I KNEW WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT MYSELF!

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO, BAKER, THE PEOPLE OF UKON BLAME YOU FOR CAPTAIN ZYLM'S DISAPPEARANCE. WE'RE HOLDING YOU FOR TRIAL.
YOU DON'T SAY! WELL, HERE'S MY STAR WITNESS... CAPTAIN ZYLM HIMSELF!

THAT...THAT THING...CAPTAIN ZYLM? NO! THAT'S THE SHARK MOB'S SECRET LEADER! BAKER, YOU'RE STAR CRAZY!
NO... THAT'S ZYLM AND THE MOB LEADER. I RECOGNIZED HIM AT THE GANG HANGOUT BY THE SCAR ON HIS THUMB!


SENDING ME TO EARTH FOR HELP AND LETTING HIS HENCHMEN KIDNAP HIM WHILE PEOPLE WATCHED WERE CLEVER RUSES TO CONCEAL HIS DUAL ROLE OF POLICE DIRECTOR AND MOB LEADER. HIS GREED FOR ILLUMO BROUGHT DEATH TO HIS GANG.

GREAT MOONS! IT TOOK COURAGE AND NERVE TO CRACK THAT MYSTERY BAKER. HOW CAN THE PEOPLE OF UKON REPAY YOU?
EASILY... LEND ME A WRECKER TO TOW BACK MY SHIP FOR REPAIRS, MIMI AND I HAVE BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO ON EARTH, AND WE'RE TAKING LATO ALONG FOR THE RIDE!

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AGAINST THIS BACK-DROP THE MYSTERIOUS, GLAMOROUS SEÑORITA RIO MATCHES WITS WITH HITLER'S HIRELINGS... WHO IS SHE? WHERE IS SHE FROM? THE ANSWER IS WRITTEN IN BLOOD IN A GAY RIO CAFE WHERE AXIS AGENTS PLY THEIR SLY AND VICIOUS TRADE...WRITTEN IN AXIS BLOOD! AND HIMMLER'S SOUTH AMERICA BULLY-BOYS WOULD PAY MUCHO DINERO, CASH, FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL SONG-GIRL, AND THEY'D PAY IT FOR HER DEAD OR ALIVE...

GIVE ME THE PAPERS. I MUST DELIVER THEM TONIGHT TO MY FRIEND, THE MINISTER OF STATE.
NOT SO FAST, COUNTESS! YOU MUST GIVE ME THE SIGN!

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